

AmeriCorps*VISTA Progress Report

Legal Applicant: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Project Name: Wisconsin DPI VISTA Project

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Grant Number: 06VSNWI009

Period Covered by this Report:

From: 01/01/2009 to 03/31/2009

Data Updates

# of VISTA Members on board at end of reporting period	17
# of Community Volunteers serving who are Baby Boomers	62
Dollar value of cash resources developed by VISTA Members	21785
# of Service Hours performed by Community Volunteers	4056
Dollar value of non-cash resources developed by VISTA Members	43032
# of VISTA Members supported by cost share	0
# of Community Volunteers serving	443

Member and Sponsor Development

	Americorps *VISTA Members	Supervisors	CNCS Funded	Funded by Other Source	Comments
On-Site Orientation	0	12	N	Y	
Community Outreach	17	15	N	Y	
Community Volunteer Generation/Recruitment	17	10	N	Y	
Effective Volunteer Management	17	15	N	Y	
Resource Mapping	3	3	N	Y	
Resource Development/Fundraising	4	2	N	Y	
Grant Writing	6	2	N	Y	
Organizational Development	17	15	N	Y	
Performance Measures	17	15	N	Y	
Tracking Systems	17	15	N	Y	
Information Technology	17	10	N	Y	
Developing On-Site Orientations and Training Plans	0	15	N	Y	
Other (Please Specify)	15	8	N	Y	New Wisconsin Promise Conference Working with the Media Webinar

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Project Plan

Service Category: Other Education

Goals

The goal is to build capacity for establishing a research-based, effective, sustainable program of family-school-community partnerships in schools serving low-income children and their families.

VISTA members will serve as facilitators to help schools to establish Action Team for Partnership (ATP). The VISTAs and ATP members will receive training and support to engage families, school staff, and others to develop a family-school-community partnership infrastructure, following a research-based approach using the Six Types of Involvement.

Service Activities

Complete training in the Action Team for Partnerships process

Conduct assets map for school community

Survey Parents and Teachers on family involvement for baseline data

With supervisor and other leaders, facilitate the establishment of ATP (must have ownership of community) and help train ATP members.

Share assets map with ATP and facilitate additional data gathering, including the Starting Points Inventory on strengths of school partnerships

Provide support for the work of the ATP to get it firmly established, beginning with the development of a one-year action plan of partnership activities and practices that address school goals and include the Six Types of Partnerships (parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community).

Support the ATP in holding regular meetings and work with it to accomplish the work plan, including recruiting volunteers and participants at events and activities.

Monitor the results of the ATP.

With ATP, organize and hold end-of-year celebration

With supervisor, complete biweekly and quarterly reports to DPI.

Survey parents and staff at end of school year to compare to baseline data.

With supervisor, complete end-of-year UPDATE for the National Network of Partnership Schools.

Result Type	Output	Performance Measure : X
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Results

Action Teams for Partnerships established. ATP members are trained.

Planned Period of Accomplishment

Q1-2

Actual Period of Accomplishment

Q2

Indicator

Number of sites with Action Teams formed.

Target # (number) or % (percent)

100 %

Actual # or % to date

100

How Measured

Sign-in sheet

Description of Data Collection

Membership list, which includes at least 2 parents, 2 teachers, and 2 other staff.

Progress this Reporting Period

At this point, all of our sites have functioning Action Teams or Advisory Councils. These teams have been facilitated and supported by the VISTA member but led by parents, staff, and community members. Our VISTA member with the Milwaukee Public Library has TWO functioning Advisory Councils at two branch libraries.

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Result Type	Output	Performance Measure : X
Results		
VISTAs map community assets and collect data on school climate.		
Planned Period of Accomplishment		Actual Period of Accomplishment
Q1		Q1 and Q2
Indicator		
Number of community asset maps submitted to DPI.		
Target # (number) or % (percent)		Actual # or % to date
100 %		100
How Measured		
Community Partner Survey		
Description of Data Collection		
community asset mapping		
Progress this Reporting Period		
All of our August start and December start VISTAs have completed their asset mapping and submitted copies to DPI VISTA Project staff. These maps help inform their outreach and partnership efforts.		

Result Type	Output	Performance Measure : X
Results		
VISTAs submit grants and procure in-kind donations for ATP programs and initiatives.		
Planned Period of Accomplishment		Actual Period of Accomplishment
Q1-4		Q1-4
Indicator		
Number of grants submitted.		
Target # (number) or % (percent)		Actual # or % to date
20 #		14
How Measured		
Sustainability Checklist		
Description of Data Collection		
Pre/post surveys, bi-weekly and quarterly reports, and community asset map will also be used. Twelve grants will have been written and submitted by VISTAs.		
Progress this Reporting Period		
VISTAs have been continuing to write and apply for grants to support their programs and bring sustainability to their work. Kelly Karls, serving at the Howe Neighborhood Family Resource Center in Green Bay wrote three grants this quarter and has already received one- a Teach Something Grant from Do Something. Chris Briggs, serving the Wausau Early Childhood Program, submitted 4 grants this Quarter including one to US Bank and one to Home Depot. These grants will go towards developing sustainable parent programming and resources.		

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Result Type	Intermediate Outcome	Performance Measure : X
Results		
Sites will implement family-school-community practices that address their school's goals to improve academic achievement.		
Planned Period of Accomplishment	Actual Period of Accomplishment	
Q1-4	Q1-4	
Indicator		
Number of activities/practices implemented.		
Target # (number) or % (percent)	Actual # or % to date	
120 #	100	
How Measured		
Activity log		
Description of Data Collection		
Action Plans and agendas of activities, as well as project descriptions, will be submitted by the VISTAs in bi-weekly and quarterly reports. Each VISTA will coordinate at least six family-school-community events or initiatives.		
Progress this Reporting Period		
This was a very successful quarter in terms of implementation of promising practices. Our VISTAs have all implemented at LEAST one activity; with several of our VISTAs coordinating many more. Dustin Young, at the Dane County Transitional School in Madison, organized a Life Skills Workshop for students and families. Additionally, Casey Gauthier helped to implement a Computers from the Heart program to teach low income families in the Rhinelander school district how to maintain and use home computers. Computers were donated from the district and re formatted by a local tech company. On Valentine's Day the families came to the school to learn to use their new home computers!		

Result Type	End Outcome	Performance Measure : X
Results		
Schools will have an identified process for partnerships that includes the Action Team for Partnerships.		
Planned Period of Accomplishment	Actual Period of Accomplishment	
end of school year	Q3	
Indicator		
Percent of Action Teams that have started work on next year action plan.		
Target # (number) or % (percent)	Actual # or % to date	
100 %	0	
How Measured		
NA		
Description of Data Collection		
By end of year, all sites will have started plans for next year. Instrument: Year-end UPDATE form completed and returned to the DPI and the NNPS for analysis.		
Progress this Reporting Period		
Sites are just beginning to work on their Action Plans for the 2009-2010 school year. We will have this data, along with data from the Year end UPDATE forms by the end of next quarter.		

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Result Type	End Outcome	Performance Measure : X
Results		
More parents will feel welcome in their children's school, have an understanding of the importance of being involved in their children's learning, and know how to participate to help their children.		
Planned Period of Accomplishment	Actual Period of Accomplishment	
school year	Q3	
Indicator		
Increase in the percent of parents indicating positive attitudes on end of year survey		
Target # (number) or % (percent)	Actual # or % to date	
20 %	0	
How Measured		
Pre/Post test		
Description of Data Collection		
VISTAs will randomly survey at least 25 parents at the beginning of the school year with a base-line survey and then again at the end of the school year.		
Progress this Reporting Period		
While our base line survey was completed in the previous quarter, our new data will not be available until the end of Quarter 3. We hope to be able to see at least a 20% increase in the number of parents who feel welcome at their child's school.		

Narratives

Challenges

Our biggest challenge this quarter has been developing the Recovery VISTA program for our project. This has required extra work on the part of the Project staff and while we feel confident that our program model is strong; the logistics of planning for this program have been complex. We developed a new host site application, new VAD, and new recruitment materials to meet the needs of this economic recovery focused program.

However, now that we have submitted our application and have approved host sites across the state, we are well on our way to recruiting VISTAs for these positions. It will be critical for us to bring on another VISTA Leader on the Fall to help with the additional VISTA members we will be supporting.

Recruitment

We successfully recruited a VISTA Leader to work with our project. Casey Gauthier, VISTA in Rhinelander, is serving as our Leader and began in early February. Casey provides support to our current members, develops monthly webinars and continues to create and produce the Monthly newsletter!

Additionally, Casey has taken the lead on recruitment for this quarter as we begin to conduct outreach to fill 16 positions in July and August. We are recruiting for the following areas: Milwaukee, West Allis, Madison, Wausau, Spooner, Oshkosh, Green Bay, and Rhinelander.

All approved host sites have been given a Recruitment Packet to assist them in local recruitment. This packet was assembled by Casey and seeks to provide our sites with the tools to look for excellent candidates in their own communities.

Training/Technical Assistance Needs

Our VISTAs have identified three training needs over the past quarter- 1) strategies for working with the media, 2) resources for Life after VISTA and 3) tips for creating sustainability at their sites.

We were able to meet these needs through webinars to accommodate our state wide membership. Casey Gauthier, our VISTA Leader, and Roxane Hagedorn, VISTA in Wausau, facilitated a Working with the Media Webinar in mid March for VISTAs and Supervisors. This provided some practical strategies for working with print and TV media.

Additionally, several VISTAs requested training on Life After VISTA including resume building tips and guidance on using the Education Award. We have invited DPI VISTA Project Alums to present on their own paths after VISTA as well as sharing resources for job hunting, applying to grad school, and writing a resume.

Finally, VISTAs were introduced to a Sustainability Tips Webinar in January. This webinar will be continued in June to build upon skills developed in this quarter. VISTAs are consistently working towards sustainable initiatives; and the opportunity to share their strategies and sit back and reflect on their site progress has been very useful for them.

Partnership/Collaboration Development

The DPI VISTA Project is working to continue strengthening partnerships with

VISTA projects at Admission Possible and Wisconsin Campus Compact
Parents Plus
Other teams at DPI

We have been working to connect with other VISTA projects (particularly those with sites in Milwaukee) in an attempt to create more effective programming on each of our parts. We plan to work with Admission Possible on orientation and training opportunities for our Milwaukee area VISTAs this Fall. Additionally, there is much potential for our VISTAs to partner throughout the year with Admission Possible VISTAs and help bring a parent involvement component to the college access process.

This quarter we have been working hard to connect with other DPI teams, particularly the Public Library Development Team, to develop a vision for our Recovery VISTA program. The PLD team has been instrumental in connecting us with communities and libraries throughout the state who might be interested in joining our project. They will also be key resources as we develop trainings and support services to our new VISTA members.

Narratives

Resource Development

This has been another successful quarter for us in terms of resource development! VISTAs procured over \$21,000 in monetary donations and over \$40,000 worth of in-kind donations. In particular, Kelly Karls in Green Bay, through successful grant writing, received over \$11,000 to support programming at the Howe Neighborhood Family Resource Center.

Michelle Traxel, serving at the Spooner Middle School, through her coordination of the Souper Bowl of Caring event; generated over \$4,000 of in kind donations from the Spooner community.

Finally, Christina Briggs, working with the Early Childhood program in Wausau, generated over \$21,000 worth of in kind donations! She received food, materials, space, and supplies for several Family nights throughout the community. Because of her hard work, over 350 families were able to participate in sport camps, Literacy nights, and Parent workshops.

Sustainability

Sustainability continues to be a top priority for our project and we are providing necessary support to our sites in this area. Additionally, we are developing tools to assist our VISTAs in thinking about sustaining their work from the beginning of the year. We feel that through the Action Team for Partnerships process, we are providing a structure for continued sustainability as these teams consist of community members, school staff, and parents who will continue partnerships after the VISTA ends his or her service. We encourage our VISTAs to empower the Action Teams to take ownership of projects and programs to build the needed capacity at their sites.

We received and reviewed host site applications for the 2009-2010 school year during this quarter and were thrilled to see that our third year sites are making measurable progress towards Sustainability and will no longer be needing a VISTA next year. The VISTAs at these sites have worked very hard to create this sustainable structure and through the support of their supervisor, parents, and staff, programs and processes will continue next year. This quarter also gave us an opportunity to share our sustainability expectations with new sites before they even receive a VISTA member.

Multi-Site Performance

Communication has been identified as the key to ensuring that our sites not only understand expectations of this project but are meeting those expectations.

We communicate with the VISTA members in the following ways:

- Bi-Weekly Reports
- Quarterly Reports
- Written feedback on all reports
- VISTA Blog
- Monthly Teleconferences/Webinars
- VISTA Project List-serv
- Monthly Newsletters
- Check-in phone calls/emails from Project Coordinator and VISTA Leader
- Site Visits
- Project Evaluation
- Exit Interviews

We communicate with the VISTA Supervisors in the following ways:

- Bi-Weekly Reports
- Quarterly Reports
- Written feedback on all reports
- Bi-monthly Teleconferences
- VSITA Project List-serv
- Monthly Newsletters (featuring a Supervisor Segment)
- Check-in phone calls/emails from Project Coordinator
- Site Visits
- Project Evaluation
- Exit Interviews

Narratives

This part quarter we have been even more effective in our communication with members due to the work of our VISTA Leader. In addition to calls and emails with VISTAs, she has set up a Facebook group to connect members with each other and build social networks. Furthermore, we continue to provide written feedback on biweekly and quarterly reports to give both the member and the Supervisor a sense of their progress.

Other Accomplishments

We have developed plans for a Summer VISTA Associate program that will host 20 VISTAs throughout the state working on summer programming, family literacy, and community partnerships.

We will be working with the following communities this summer:

Woodville, Ashland, Eau Claire, Racine, Green Bay, Madison, Milwaukee, Delavan, Shiocton, and Arbor Vitae Woodruff.

Several of these communities host our current VISTA members and they will partner to strengthen programs. Other sites are new to our project and will be continuing to work with us in the Fall through the Recovery program.

Our Recovery VISTA program is another big success for our project. We will be bringing on eight VISTA members to work with Public Libraries throughout the state on job training, financial literacy, and other economic recovery projects. This project meets a genuine community need in Wisconsin and our partnership with public libraries is an ideal setting for these VISTAs.

Stories

Penny Bruskin- Milwaukee Public Library (Milwaukee)

The Center Street Advisory Council has helped address some community barriers to using the library. Through our open forum, Beverly Watkins (Next Door Foundation) and other Advisory Council members were able to voice some concerns of individuals in the community who had issues with using their library cards due to old fines. Through the open format of this council, members were able to discuss issues with the Center Street Librarians who were then able to address the issue from within the library. Just having a working library card allows both tangible and psychological benefits for community members. Those who had incurred old fines were intimidated by the library and unable to use computers or other resources because of this barrier. Now that the library and community groups are aware of this issue, they are better prepared to help residents go through the proper channels to reinstate cards and excuse fines.

Brendan Gants-Parents Plus/BEAM (Milwaukee)

I think the most important success I have been a part of this quarter is moving our program at BEAM significantly toward sustainability. I'm also very excited about the partnerships and collaborations we have been able to develop at BEAM. Our partnership with the YMCA and collaboration with ECE appears to have us headed towards putting together a fantastic Parent Resource Center next quarter, and the YMCA partnership may bear many other fruits as well. Our Parent Workshops have been increasingly popular, our partnership with National City Bank has helped significantly in moving the ATP towards sustainability, and there are several other partnerships still in the early stages that could develop more next quarter. The first quarter of our work at BEAM was very much focused on developing a strong Action Team, and in this quarter we really wanted to make the ATP more sustainable while developing more community partnerships. I think we've made a great deal of progress with both of those goals.

Kelly Karls- Howe Neighborhood Family Resource Center (Green Bay)

One major success for me this quarter was the successful completion of the Parent's Night In program. Because of low family enrollment I was worried that this program would not make an impact. However, after the first session, I knew that we were making an impact. The first evening 5 adults showed up. After the event, they all said that they would like to bring others. The next week we had 8 adults. It was wonderful to see that they were bringing other parents to the program because they found it to be helpful and a non-judgmental environment. All parents gave positive feedback saying that they would like to participate again, and I believe if we duplicated this program we would have more families. I was very encouraged by the

Narratives

families bringing new families, as this is what the connections we form are supposed to be all about. My recruiting and called was not nearly as effective as word of mouth from other parents. I considered this to be a great success and highlighted the need for more parenting support programs.

Nicole Stachurski- Grove Elementary School (Wisconsin Rapids)

A great success this quarter involves safeguarding our students. All staff, approved volunteers, and visiting staff now wear identification badges. I have created a volunteer database assuring that every volunteer is suitable to be around children, this involves checking their names on the Department of Justice sex offender list. This has played a big part in addressing our school's overall safety procedures. We have encouraged parents, families and staff to know who walks our halls and conveyed a message that safety is important to us, and their children are important to us.

Attachments and Links

Compiled Quarterly Reports (emailed)

January, February, and March newsletters:
<http://dpi.wi.gov/fscp/vnwsltrhm.html>

DPI You Tube Clips (produced by Matt Dolezal)
Family Closet:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pYkxtumGDAs>

Family Literacy Night:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E7OnoZAb4tQ&feature=Playlist&p=BEABB727EE4E9435&index=3>

Parent Resource Center:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ksg7CV3j1Os&feature=Playlist&p=BEABB727EE4E9435&index=4>